



Tennessee Statewide  
**Wellness Through  
Employment**  
Conference

**September 23-24, 2025**  
Embassy Suites by Hilton  
Nashville South - Cool Springs

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Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

BREAKOUT B2

**COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED  
EMPLOYMENT:  
A Key Component to Recovery**

Tennessee Statewide Wellness Through Employment Conference

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services



OPENING REMARKS  
PANELIST INTRODUCTIONS

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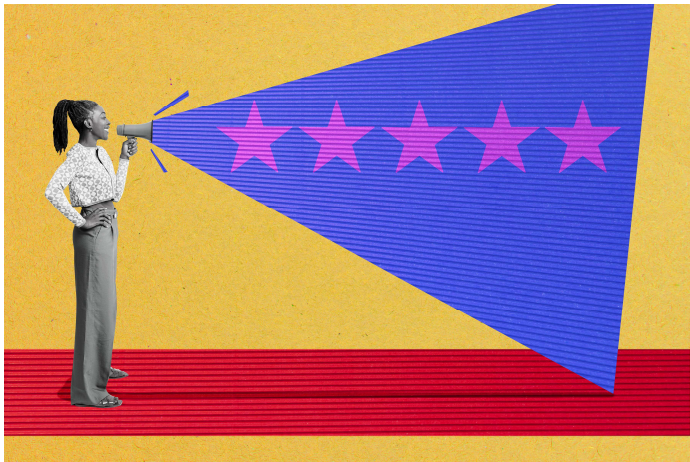
Tennessee Statewide Wellness Through Employment Conference

# Competitive, Integrated Employment: A Key Component to Recovery

2025 TN Statewide Wellness Through Employment Conference  
Ruth Brock and Jennie Keleher  
Sep 23, 2025




## Mentimeter Activity



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Mentimeter



# INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

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What is your job title, and why did you choose to attend this session?

# AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

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What is the most important ingredient in developing a culture of competitive, integrated employment within a mental health agency?

AUDIENCE  
FEEDBACK

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Learning Objectives:

- Discuss strategies leaders can use to develop a culture of employment within the organization.
- Learn about common challenges to developing a culture of employment and effective ways to address those challenges.
- Identify the IPS fidelity criteria key to an agency focus on competitive employment.



# What we know...

- Culture shift starts with **LEADERSHIP**
  - Leadership must be committed to competitive, integrated employment at multiple levels of the organization
  - Leadership must themselves believe in recovery and seek to hire/develop staff who do also
  - Agency mission/vision should reflect employment and recovery
  - Employment should be part of the organizational identity

(Marshall, et. al., 2008; Harkko, et. al., 2025)



# Example mission statements

- Offering pathways to independence for people facing mental health and substance use issues to reclaim hope, live, and work in their communities.
- Where people are priority and complex behavioral health needs are met with hope, healing, and recovery.
- Our mission is to serve individuals, families and communities through prevention, treatment and recovery services, ensuring that help today leads to a better tomorrow.



## Benefits of CIE

- Reduced hospitalization days
- Increased quality of life
- Improved social functioning
- Improved financial functioning/increased earnings
- Positive effects on mental health
  
- “In the past, people may have used labels to describe me like ‘mentally ill,’ ‘welfare mom,’ and ‘homeless.’ Now my titles are, ‘financial administrator,’ ‘working mom,’ and ‘student.’”

(Jackel, et. al., 2017; Baller, et. al., 2019; Reme, et. al., 2019)



## The Ripple Effects of Employment



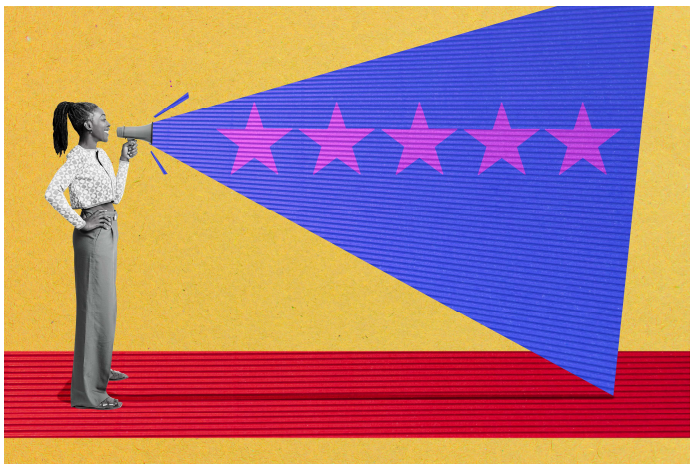


# IPS fidelity criteria for focusing on CIE

- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews
- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas
- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year
- Agency measures rate of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff




# Mentimeter Activity





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What do you think are the greatest challenges to developing a culture of competitive, integrated employment within your agency?

AUDIENCE  
FEEDBACK

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## Addressing challenges

- Buy-in among staff/perspectives on employment as part of recovery
- Lack of understanding about role of employment in recovery
  - Success stories
  - Education/share the research
  - Integrated care
  - Development of champions



## Addressing challenges

- Funding/programmatic issues/staffing
  - Research support
  - Reallocation of existing funds
  - Leveraging vocational rehabilitation
  - Hiring and staff retention
  - Learning from partners/other mental health agencies in the state



# Addressing challenges

- Client/family member concerns
  - Success stories
  - Self-referral
  - Peer involvement
  - Family outreach and education
  - Benefits counseling



# Addressing challenges

- Competing agency-level priorities
  - Continue to examine and share the research
  - Track employment and mental health service utilization



## Small Group Activity: Developing a plan

- Leadership Commitment
- Vision and Purpose
- Staff Engagement and Culture Building
- Environmental and Visual Reinforcement
- Policy, Procedure and Structure Alignment
- Development of the IPS Team/Program
- Measurement and Accountability
- Sustainability and Continuous Improvement



## Thank you!

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The IPS Employment Center  
<https://ipsworks.org>





# Questions & Answers

## In-Person Attendees . . .

Please raise your hand if you'd like to ask a question or share a comment. A Mic Runner will bring a wireless handheld microphone to you. Kindly speak directly into the mic so that everyone—including our virtual participants—can hear you clearly.

## Virtual Attendees . . .

Please post your questions and comments in the Chat Box to the right of your viewing screen. Our Chat Box Monitor will relay them to the speakers and panelists for response during the session.



**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT** | Virtual participants will not be able to hear any in-room dialogue unless it is spoken directly into a microphone. Please wait for a mic runner to deliver a wireless handheld microphone before speaking. Kindly direct your comment or question into the microphone to ensure it is heard clearly. Your support in fostering inclusive and effective communication is greatly appreciated by all—especially our virtual attendees.

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### COMPLETE CONFERENCE EVALUATION FORMS AND THE REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION OF CEs EARNED

Up to 7.0 CE units or contact  
/ clock hours available for  
this event.

QUESTIONS?  
Email: [tamho@tamho.org](mailto:tamho@tamho.org)

#### EVALUATIONS



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WTE2025Eval>

#### REQUEST FOR CE DOCUMENTATION



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